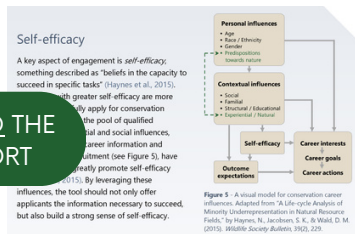


Augmenting Conservation Hiring

The Institute is excited to release its new report examining the current state of conservation recruitment and workforce diversity. Authored by the Institute's newest Conservation Research Associate, Will Baughman, this needs analysis identifies who is employing inclusive recruitment practices and what new tools are needed.



[DOWNLOAD THE FULL REPORT](#)

FEATURED PARK



Photos and facts of your favorite parks, one issue at a time

New River Gorge National Park & Preserve West Virginia

FACT 1: Originally established as a National River in 1978, New River Gorge was redesignated as a National Park & Preserve in 2020. In addition to being one of the **world's oldest rivers** (~300 million years old), it is the nation's fourth longest south-to-north flowing river.

FACT 2: For 26 years, the park's New River Gorge Bridge was the longest single span arch bridge **in the world**, and it remains the longest outside of China. The annual Bridge Day festival, celebrated this year on Oct. 21st, is the the state's **largest** single-day festival.



Nominate *your* favorite local, state, or national park [here](#) so our subscribers can learn about it.

PARK PERKS



Visualizing key research to show why parks matter

While national parks are best known for their protection of modern ecosystems, many parks contain a wealth of ancient resources as well. In honor of [National Fossil Day](#), we look this week at a 2018 [article](#) highlighting the paleontological value of the US national park system. The authors, all of whom are National Park Service (NPS) employees, assembled data from the NPS Paleontology Program to describe the current state of its fossil collections. The result was a fascinating overview of a little-known, but crucially important, part of the national park system.

Fossil Record of the National Park System



64% of NPS sites contain fossils

- Fossils found in NPS units have origins stretching from the Proterozoic to the Holocene, representing more than **538 million years** of natural history.
- At least **2,293** of these fossils are known to be holotypes, or specimens used to describe a species, providing a basis for further research.
- As of 2018, there are **640,845** cataloged fossil specimens in NPS collections. At least 185 non-NPS museums hold NPS fossils, including 19 in foreign countries.
- New fossils are found regularly. Just **last week**, NPS [announced](#) the discovery of an ancient shark species based on fossils from Mammoth Cave National Park.

The article indicates that the NPS has made major contributions to paleontology, protecting an enormous diversity of specimens that might otherwise have never been accessible to paleontologists. National parks also play a crucial educational role, using their ancient collections to spark curiosity in visitors. However, funding is limited and as of 2018, **fewer than 10 parks** employ staff paleontologists to assist with collection management. Given recent [proposals](#) for drastic budget *reductions*, it remains vitally important to inform the public about the value of NPS paleontological work.

PLAY GROUND

What do you call a musical killer whale?

a solo orca-stra

What do you call a group of them?

a podcast

SHUTDOWN PERILS

Due to the vandalism, looting, and buildup of trash and human waste of the 2018 shutdown, all 425 national park sites will likely close next shutdown. States are considering donations to keep major parks open, but any [reimbursement](#) of operating funds would require an act of Congress.

Urge Congress to prioritize our parks.